

Commission Minutes
October 10, 2007

Commissioners Present: Marcia Merrill, Chair; Sharon Baade; Gretchen Bailey; Eileen Boland; Cary Brown; Carol Buchdahl; Mary Claire Carroll; Retta Dunlap; Ruth Finn; Cathy Frey; and Karen Henry.

Commissioners Absent: Linda Fogg, Anne McClaughry, Marion Milne, and Vicky Young.

Advisory Council Members Present: Ed Booth representing American Civil Liberties Union, Joanne Brooking representing Central Vermont Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Joanna Cole representing Vermont League of Women Voters, Barbara Hannon representing Older Women's League, Lindy Hatcher representing Vermont Federation of Business and Professional Women, Margaret Luce representing Vermont State Nurses' Association, Louise Luring representing American Association of University Women, and Carol Story representing Girl Scout Council of Vermont.

Staff and Intern: Janet Bullard, Wendy Love, Shelby Gillespie, Judith Irving, and Lilly Talbert.

Guests: Carmel Quinn from the Girl Scout Council of Vermont, Hallie Washburn from Williamstown, Brittany Weiland from Georgia, and Courtney Mattison from Rutland.

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

Meeting called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Minutes

Motion made by Eileen Boland to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2007 Commission Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Eileen Boland and voted unanimously.

Fall Meeting Process

Marcia stated that the ad hoc committee chairs group had decided to focus the fall meetings around the issues of harassment and bullying. She also noted that we would have a very short evaluation at the end of each meeting. This will help the ad hoc committee chairs group as they plan future agendas.

Marcia reported that today's meeting would include information from a panel of girl scouts regarding harassment and bullying. The November meeting will also be spent on this topic. At the December meeting we will review the information that was presented at the September – November meetings to see if and what the Commission might be able to do regarding harassment and bullying.

Presentation: Bullying and Harassment in Schools – Panel of Girl Scouts from the Girl Scout Council of Vermont

Sharon Baade reminded everyone that the Commission and the Girl Scout Council had conducted an online survey last year regarding bullying and harassment. The survey results were released during an educational panel at the State House in front of legislators. Carmel Quinn of the Girl Scout Council of Vermont then introduced three girl scout girl panelists: Hallie Washburn from Williamstown, Brittany Weiland from Georgia, and Courtney Mattison from Rutland who shared instances of harassment and bullying that they have experienced or have seen their peer's experience. The girls talked about things that have happened at their schools, as well as online at Facebook or MySpace and answered questions from commissioners and advisors

Girls Rock the Capital Program Overview

Carmel Quinn provided an overview of the Girl Scout legislative internship program entitled, "Girls Rock the Capital". The program is in its fourth year and was started by girls who were involved in girl scouting who expressed an interest in having a better understanding of what happens in the Legislature.

In the first year of the program, five girls participated. They were mentored by thirteen legislators and spent two days in the Legislature. The program has continued to grow both in the number of girls and also the number of days spent in the legislature. This past year thirteen girls were chosen who spent twelve days spread out over the length of the session. Interested girls need to apply for the internship program and need three letters of reference.

The girls come together the evening before their trip to the State House to prepare for their internship. The girls are partnered with legislators and spend their time at the state house shadowing their legislative partner. The interns have participated in legislative caucuses, have testified before committees, and have learned the ins and outs of the statehouse and how the legislature works.

Applications are reviewed and chosen by the Girl Scout council staff. Although this year, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is sponsoring a girl and they will be involved in choosing which girl they will sponsor. Sponsorships are always welcome Carmel noted.

Carmel then turned the presentation back over to the Hallie, Brittany, and Courtney to share their experiences as participants in the Girls Rock the Capital Program.

Vermont Women's History Project Update

Marcia congratulated Judith Irving on her receipt of the 2007 Richard Hathaway Award for the best media produced in history in Vermont for the year. Judith thanked Marcia and noted that the award was given to the Vermont Women's History Project for the video that was developed at the Vermont History Expo in 2006 focusing on women's role in history. She also noted that the award this year is shared with an author from Burlington.

Judith then gave an update on the Vermont Women's History Project including announcing that the history project steering committee has decided that women's history shouldn't just be celebrated during Women's History Month, but all twelve months of the year. Women actively contribute to Vermont's history every day and as such we need to be recognizing and sharing information about their contributions. In order to spotlight women's history every day, Judith is looking for partners who are interested in co-sponsoring events and being part of the larger effort in 2008 to spotlight women's history every day, every way. If you have events or know of events around women's history, please contact Judith.

Wage Discrimination Ruling – Vermont Response

Lilly thanked everyone for writing letters regarding the Ledbetter Supreme Court ruling dealing with wage discrimination. She distributed copies of letters/editorials that were written by commissioners and advisors and asked folk to talk about their experiences in writing the letters.

Lilly then reported about other initiatives that have happened or will be happening to call attention to this recent decision. The Attorney General has outlined employer and employee rights in various business publications around the state to call attention to the new court decision. Cheryl Hanna, a Professor at Vermont Law School and frequent commentator on Vermont Public Radio, has agreed to a commentary and she is also conducting a negotiation workshop for law students at Vermont Law School. Lilly reported that she has researched and developed a draft list of trainers who offer training on negotiation skills and other workplace issues such as flextime. Once the list of negotiation trainers is complete, Lilly reported that she would email it out to commissioners and advisors and others who are interested. Last but not least, Wendy and Pat Moulton Powden, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor, will be recording a public service announcement alerting folk to the decision and where to go for

more information. This will be taped next week and then Lilly will get it to radio stations across the state.

VCW Global Policy Statements

Marcia stated that the revised policy statements were disseminated and edited at the September Commission meeting by committee. The revised and edited copy was part of the October e-packet.

Motion made by Carol Buchdahl to accept the revised policy statements as presented.
Seconded by Ruth Finn.

Discussion regarding the policy statements ensued.

As a result of this discussion, motion made by Carol Buchdahl to amend the revised policy statements a follows:

Health and Safety –first sentence, “The Vermont Commission on Women supports (delete **universal**) health care coverage...”

Leadership and Public Life – first sentence, “The Vermont Commission on Women encourages, supports, and promotes women in all phases of public life, including election to public office, appointments to local and state commissions (delete **and boards both public and private** and change to say) and public and private boards, and ...”

Seconded by Mary Claire Carroll. Vote on amendment passed unanimously as did vote on original motion.

New Business

Carol said that she thought the Commission –through donations by interested individuals-should sponsor a “Girls Rock the Capital Program intern via the Commission’s foundation VCWERF. Cost to sponsor a girl is \$1200. After discussion, commissioners agreed that to sponsor a participant to be chosen by the girl scouts. Checks should be made payable to the Vermont Commission on Women Education and Research Foundation (VCWERF).

Margaret congratulated Lindy as the First Chair of the Aging in Place event, which happened recently. The event was a real opportunity for baby boomers and seniors to come together and learn new skills or refresh their skill base.

Marcia welcomed Louise Luring as the new representative of American Association of University Women. Louise thanked Marcia and stated that she owns a bed and breakfast in Saxtons River and has been involved in AAUW for many years.

Lindy announced that she is planning a Women's Forum for Tuesday, October 16th at the Community Room downstairs in Bethany Church along with Women Business Owners Network. She has invited other women's organizations as well to attend. The goal of the event is to spread the word about the services provided by various women's organizations.

Marcia informed everyone that a suggestion was made at a recent Commission meeting to have pictures of commissioners on our website. She stated that over the next few months commissioner pictures will be taken at Commission meetings for posting on our website.

Plus\Delta Evaluation

Eileen encouraged folk to speak up at this time regarding what went well for the meeting and also what could be done better.

Went well

- Appreciate policy revision process, but glad that policy work has been eliminated from committee work
- Informative
- Active action oriented program today - appreciated hearing about Girls Rock the Capital program
- Kept to time
- Good discussion
- Good facilitation by the chair
- Hearing Marcia's comments about fall meeting process put things in perspective

Could be done better

- Better marker for doing evaluation use black
- Process/meeting outline thought committees were going to meet during commission meetings on a regular basis
- Committees meet via conference call
- Would like small group work

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.